8 Dover St. Feb. 27th, 1879.

Mr. Sargent,

Dear Sir,

There are several reasons why I would rather not publish the experiences to which you allude. They came through the agency of private individuals, who are very strongly opposed to Spiritualism. Even if I suppressed names, those who know me would trace them, and very serious offence would follow.

Though I have been a writer so many years, I have a great dislike to any personal relations with the public. I write about

Please give my respects to Mr. Sargent, I enjoyed my call greatly, and it will always give me pleasure to see him.

subjects, but never about myself.

If I should do what you wish, I should at once be reported as endorsing the whole of Spiritualism. I should not object to that, if it were true. But the real fact is, that the greater part of the movement is offensive to my reason and my taste.

Like all unpopular sects, they are eager for converts; my half affirmations would be accepted for the whole, and I should be surrounded by a swarm of tedious, uncomfortable people. I have encountered several

such people, and I have found that the most patient affirmations of rationalism have no power whatever to help them preserve the balance of their minds.

The fact is, my dear Mr. Sargent, there are few minds able to examine the subject philosophically, as you do. The large majority, who are under the necessity of leaning upon some authority, merely change the authority of priests, for the authority of spirits. Of course, this infalli-ble guide, like all other infalli-ble guides, proves extremely fallible.

I have a neighbor, whose faculties I think are really deranged by the constant habit of consulting spirits. The fact is, the subject is so veiled in mystery, and is at the same time so closely inter-woven with the affections and hopes of the human soul, that it has a perilous fascination, irresistable to minds that have little strength.

That some of the alleged phenomona are real, and, of course, based upon some laws of our mysterious being, I do not doubt. But one who loves his fellow creatures should be very cautious about ministering to superstition. Yours respectfully and cordially, L. Maria Child.

8 Dover St. March 14th, 1879

Dear Mr. Sargent,

I thank you for your excellent letter, which does credit to your head and heart. With regard to the existence of a "super-sensuous power," which is now, and always has been, in constant activity, I am indeed as strongly convinced as yourself. I have carefully read materialistic theories, but, while I recognized a great deal of truth in them, I have always felt their utter inadequacy to explain a vast amount of well-authenticated facts.

On the other hand, so many things that I once believed have proved to be illusions, that I have become cautious, and perhaps too distrustful. My state of mind is, like the coffin of Mohammed, suspended between heaven and earth. I have had sufficient evidence to convince me that involuntary writing is a fact; and I can see no way

of accounting for it, except by supposing it is done by some agency of intelligences outside of ourselves. Still, the question arises whether those intelligences have ever existed on this planet, in mortal bodies, or whether they are beings created on a higher plane than ourselves, endowed with larger vision, and more expansive faculties, which enable them to see our affairs, and even our thoughts. Either way, it is not very pleasant, to those who wish to keep a "sanctum sanctorum" of individuality, to feel that they are perpetually surrounded by a "cloud of witnesses".

I agree with you that the subject ought to be candidly and patiently investigated. But how difficult it is to do it! This exceptional faculty called mediumistic comes and goes, and it is not always possible for the coolest investigator to decide whether it is real, or simulated. The love of producing a sensation, and the love of money, and even a tender

Thanks for your article in "The Medium."

sympathy with bereaved hearts, render the temptation to deceive rather too strong for average human nature to resist.

So much falsehood and twaddle are mixed with the communications, that I don't think I could find much comfort in the conviction that they came from the spirits of departed mortals. I have found this world so common-place, and so full of shams, that the prospect of going to another one like it is rather disheartening. True, we should be likely to attract those with whom we assimilate; but that is also true here, to a considerable extent. Yet my enjoyment of a good book, or a beautiful picture, is often sadly marred by the reflection that thousands around me are utterly incapable of participating in such pleasures. I think I would rather go to sleep and never wake up, than be transferred to a world where rogues, liars, and fools abound, as they do here.

The unpopularity of Spiritualism would

Thanks for your article in "The Medium."

not have the slightest power to deter me from espousing it, if I felt as sure of my ground as I did in the days of youthful enthusiasm, when Swedenborgianism seemed to me a direct revelation from heaven. In fact, I have little or nothing to lose by any eccentric movement. I have twice spoiled my chance for literary success; first by becoming a champion of Anti-Slavery, and secondly of Free Religion. I consider myself very lucky if I do not incur debt by publishing a book. For a long series of years, I have lived entirely apart from what is called society, and I am so indifferent to all the world has to offer in that direction, that I am completely independent of "Mrs. Grundy". There are no persons whom I respect so highly as those whose earnest convictions lead them to espouse an unpopular cause. That feeling, in fact, forms the basis of my interest in you. With respects to Mrs. Sargent, I am very cordially yours,

L. Maria Child.